



# NEURON



*\$1.50* AUSTIN ATARI COMPUTER ENTHUSIASTS *\$1.50*

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JF



## AACE Officers 1987-1988

(AREA CODE 512 unless otherwise indicated)

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	PC PURSUIT	214-589-2588
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COM(Telecom.)		
KIDS		
ST	Mike Detlefsen	836-5394
South Austin	John Gibson	288-1751
Game-Adventure		

\*Has SIG Meetings

\*\*\*\*\* Newsletter Production Staff \*\*\*\*\*

Diane Striegler, Dale Cone, Rick Detlefsen, and Dave Mann

\*\*\*\*\* Regular Authors \*\*\*\*\*

David Mann, Mike Detlefsen,  
Rick Detlefsen, and Ed Spurlock

Article cutoff is the 15th.

\* Support the Vendors and Dealers \*

\* which advertise in this Newsletter \*

\* Mention Austin ACE when you purchase \*

## errata \* errata \* errata

The AUSTIN ATARI COMPUTER ENTHUSIASTS (AACE) is a non-profit, independent group of Users of the ATARI computer systems. 'ATARI', 'AACE', and specific references to products and model numbers are copyrighted by ATARI Corp. No financial support is received from ATARI.

Membership dues are \$15.00 per year, mostly to cover newsletter, room, and SIG expenses.

This group maintains Disk libraries of mostly Public Domain software in ATARI, CP/M, ST and PC formats. See the 'TRADIN' POST' for more information. Our Disk Party is to allow members to copy disks from the library as desired. Copying charges keep the dues at a minimum and allow us to obtain more software. You pay for what you use. Groups are encouraged to exchange newsletters and libraries with us (no pirates, please!).

AACE does not condone or solicit pirating or any illegal use of non-public domain software.

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AACE grants permission to Exchange groups to reprint articles from our members provided credit is given to both the author and AACE.

All statements in this newsletter are the opinions of the authors and not necessarily those of the officers. AACE will not be responsible for damages as a result of any construction article appearing in this newsletter. We reserve the right to edit any material for inclusion and make any corrections of articles.

## \* AACE PRODUCT UPDATES \*

Updates for software purchased through the Tradin' Post are free if sent with a disk and prepaid mailer. Otherwise, send \$4.00 per update (for listings of ATARI format, non-M.L. updated programs, see the Tradin' Post column. Disk Party updates can be made there.

## \* ARTICLE SUBMISSION \*

by preference:

1. Proboard-300/1200 baud(467-6004)
2. Disk
3. hardcopy
4. handwritten

DO NOT FORMAT THE TEXT. DO NOT USE PRINTER CONTROL CODES. THANK YOU. USE NON-DOCUMENT MODE IN WORD PROCESSORS THAT HAVE IT.

Graphics pictures or charts on disk or tape must be a straight 8 bit 62 sector binary file, hardcopy, or Gemini 10X screen dump file..

I reserve the right to reject an article for any reason (particularly if the print is light). If several months columns are sent, then please number or date them for the cover month.

## \* ADVERTISING \*

Per issue:

Page: 1:\$20.00 1/2:\$12.00 1/4:\$ 8.00 Members

Classified: FREE

Business Card \$5.00

See the Editor for multi-issue discounts.

This group is only as good as what the members put into it. If the members don't support its activities, then the group becomes isolated from a select group of people. The group can become closed and stale.

Send your original articles, drawings, and puzzles for a better newsletter.

If you're new to computing, others can learn from your discoveries.

## \* ALL EXCHANGE NEWSLETTERS \*

TO:Attn: Dave Mann  
7108 Spurlock Drive  
Austin, TX 78731



**\*\*\* SPECIAL HOLIDAY PARTY \*\*\***  
**AUSTIN A.C.E.**  
is having a Holiday Party

Mark your calendar!  
(better yet, come)

December 12, 1987  
7:00 PM TO END  
ST. GEORGES CHURCH

**The day's events:**

The Disk Party 1 PM to 5 PM.

MIDI MAZE rehearsal 6 PM to 7 PM.

The Holiday party 7 PM to end.

AACE will provide some  
chips and drinks. You the  
membership must bring goodies!  
We are having a MIDI MAZE  
contest on ST's with prizes  
awarded.

Other games/demos will be  
running on other machines.

Only those with current AACE  
memberships are allowed (along with  
their immediate families.)  
Anyone can join or renew that night.

Club and related Atari business  
representatives are also welcome!

**\*\*\*\*\* SEE YOU THERE \*\*\***  
ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH  
S.E. CORNER AIRPORT AND I.H. 35





## GENERAL INTEREST SECTION

### MISCELLANEOUS NOTES...

by Rick Detlefsen

stardate 1987.08.31

A lot has happened since the last newsletter (April 87). As I am writing this, a newsletter was copied seven weeks ago, but a larger one is being readied to mail out with it. In MAY I sent out a Special Notices Flyer which most people apparently ignored. Below I've outlined and documented the events you probably missed:

#### MAY 6 ----> Atari ST Safari

\*\*\*\*\*

Sponsored by **ATARI Corp** and **Software Exchange**, it was moved a couple of doors down from SE and to a day Atari could attend (because of the Atari fair in Dallas May 8 and 9th). Complete with stuffed animals and hides (urgh!), there were various ST related vendors present—Atari provided the ST's, drives, monitors—including a new one with a built in-drive, Hybrid Arts with a synthesizer rack or two was demoing music and digitized songtracks and they had two sets of four ST's set up to play their new **Midi Maze** game. This is a game where you are a happy face running around a three D maze killing all others—up to 16 players at the same time—used to be called 'Kill a happy face' but was deemed to be too violent. Other software from various companies include Neochrome with and without the blitter chip (showing the bird demo—didn't make much difference about 50% faster—though they say in text mode (why not show it!) it really makes a difference), & Publishing Partner (I think), among others. Yes, AACE had a table here. Atari's Neil Harris and Sandy Austin were there, and ATARI was giving away promo items from the Warner Co. days—T shirts, back packs, mobiles, posters, scarves, pithe helmets, and kites. Seemed to have an excellent crowd during the times I was there, though the room was a little small and warm. Knowing that our own General meeting was originally the same day (the 7th), I sent Sandy Austin, the User Group co-ordinator a letter in hopes that they could talk at our meeting (the fair ended at 5:30 with our meeting at 8:00). Sandy called me a couple of weeks before the fair saying that someone would be at our meeting. We set up for the Safari on May 5th because of the date change. Sandy didn't remember setting up our meeting on the 7th, and wasn't able to do so anyway since they all had to be in Dallas that day setting up for the bigger (and more important) show there. Considering that they were literally hopping from one show to the next without much benefit of returning to California, I guess not letting AACE know of their plans changing is more or less understandable, but don't they believe in keeping track of these things on a calendar? Must make for hard times in show biz. Speaking of conflicts, it really would have been nice to have felt like part of the Safari. We were never really informed of what was happening, nor of the date changes. Any real information came by accident and resulted in our tossing out 300 flyers because the dates were wrong (SE knew of the changes two weeks earlier but told everyone except us). When next a faire occurs in Austin, I won't be a part of it



unless we get proper information and the 8 bit COMPUTER line is included.

#### May 7 ----> General Meeting

\*\*\*\*\*

was interesting. Jerry Humphrey(?) otherwise known as Rad Moose, gave a very interesting talk. He had to end it at 9:15 to leave to catch a plane for Dallas so that he could do his booth work at the Faire. His day started out with sitting in the hotel lobby from noon(check out time) until about 3:30 when I picked him up. We went over to the Airport to get his ticket and show him the departure gate, then went over to AB Computers south to visit. At the Dallas faire I found out that his plane flight out was delayed for 1 1/2 hours so he waited at Mueller watching TV(could have had a better time at the meeting but didn't know the phone number or where we were-five minutes away). When he finally arrived at Love field, it took him about two hours to contact an Atari person to come get him(his luggage had been sent ahead, so he only had demos with him, plus, he didn't know what hotel he was booked in). It was about 2:30 before he finally arrived at his room.

#### ----> The May Disk Party

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was moved for our and the churches convenience. The ATARI Road Show Faire was at the Informart in Dallas May 9th. AACE rented a coach van for the 8 members(16 signed up) that went. We had a real nice trip chatting and trying out the new 65MPH speed limit on IH35. This was an all Atari fair, though the other user groups had their regular meetings on the other floors, with the usual dealers in the basement. The fair room was set up with business around the outside and a double row down the middle. The Atari booth was a tent that covered four booth spaces at one end of the middle row near the door. They were showing the Blitter chip; a graphics program; and a telecom program(Rad Moose was accessing GENIE) on the ST, with Atariwriter+; Atari Planetarium; and others on the 8 bit. Also shown was the new XEP80 80 column hardware for the 8 bits. Sandy Austin and Neil Harris were at the booth.

Other vendors include Broderbund, Antic(with Cad 3d and their LCD glasses), Analog with current un-released issues, Michtron, Beckmeyer, Hybrid Arts with their synth racks and a 10 ST midi Maze Competition, Best Electronics with replacement parts, Sof Logic, Sub Logic showing their Simulation software, Astra with their 5" and hard drives, Fleet Street showing Publishing Partner, Micromiser with thier new ultra 'Turbo data base' for the 8 bit, ICD with their interfaces and MIO products, Meganax C, Disk Publishers Inc. with the New Aladdin magazine on a disk for 8 bit; ST; and Amiga, Word Perfect, ST User Group, DALACE(the Atari group there), Computalk BBS, Computer Discovery, and Beta Byte Plus. At 4:00 most people went to the main auditorium for an Atari news presentation by Neil Harris[rumor has it that after the Austin ST Safari, Neil was going back to California and not be at the Dallas fair. DALACE and the others involved in pulling the Dallas show together raised such a fuss and threatened to cancel the show if Neil was not there. Atari had Neil fly back on the 'red-eye' for the fair. (In fairness, Neil was only trying to get much needed work done for the Hanover fair or Summer CES and the Dallas show conflicted). Topics discussed were the XEP80 due out in July(not yet), the ST laser printer(not out), 2 and 4 mega ST'S(out but no blitter), the AMY chip is at the third company trying without success to put the thing on one chip so it is on indefinite hold, Target has discontinued selling Commodore



systems, the 65XE is being revamped into the XEGS(game system) with the theory that game system sales is still very strong and companies that got burned before will not sell computers(or Ataris) will sell a game system (that can be expanded into a real computer). There are about 1000 dealers of Atari products in the US with a goal of 2000. The ST is the best overall selling system in Europe. Atari bought or is buying a semi-conductor plant to turn out chips faster and cheaper(this is the delay in the laser printer, the XEP80, etc.). And lastly, if you want to become a software author, send your program to John Skrutch. They want high quality \*cheap\* software. Three hundred to four hundred people were in attendance.

The trip was a lot of fun. The down side is that the club lost a little money because too few people that signed up actually went.

#### MAY 23 ----> Disk Party

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Instead of a Disk Party, we had a **Document the Library** day instead. This attracted the staggering number of 10 people in and out that day. We added six disks to the 8 bit library doc file for a total of about 60 out of 200+ disks in six years(I don't know how many ST disks were documented). When all of this information is assembled we will mail out a listing. The information you find in this list about each program/disk is it until people show more interest in helping. I won't arrange this again.

**Austin Seminars, Inc.**, the people bringing the **Austin Computer Fair**, moved it to May this year(instead of June). While there were a lot of people, there were not as many exhibitors as last year. The booths were two feet deeper this year, and didn't cover as much of Palmer Auditorium so it was really half the size of last year's fair. I think this was due to moving the fair, though they said that businesses indicated a preference for May. Bad move in my book. We almost didn't have a booth this year. First, I didn't know about the show being moved until about one month earlier. Second I absolutely was not going to be immersed in it this year(I did my due two years running). Our May 7th meeting got us a coordinator, **Eleanora Robards** who arranged for the booth, furniture, electricity, and staff. I ended up bringing most of the hardware, software, and freebies and sellables to the show. **Robert Ober** of **AB Computers South** furnished us with a 1040 ST system. I showed up on Thursday at around 9 AM. Robert had to leave for work after helping me bring the stuff to the booth. I set the entire booth up alone. While this only took two hours, I waited around until 1:00 when I had to leave. Since I had no idea who was working(since no one helped set up), I returned before the show opened at 5:30. **Fred Cone** was there and said he had arrived mid afternoon to set up(which is too late in any event). Since I had no contact with Eleanora, I ended spending a lot of time there just to make sure the booth had at least one person, which is all it usually had, though there really needs to be at least two. Again, I won't ever have any thing to do with another fair. If someone wants to handle the 88 faire, be prepared to do everything. My experiences and time are no longer available. The club lost about 100 dollars for booth expenses which was not made back in sales or memberships(the previous year(86) we broke even, but then we had three people in the booth most of the time, too). Our presentation consisted of programs on the 8 bitters-the Club marquee, Dandy in front for people to play, and various graphics/animation demos(the



walking Robot from Xanth Systems is still superb. Passers by are still dubious about the Atari being able to generate the image-they sometimes insist it must be a VCR playing it back. Usually, 'other' brand owners.), and other pieces. On the ST we were showing Time Bandits for people to play, Star Raiders, and Star Glider as well. We had other things of a more serious nature to show as well, St Writer and Neochrome, I believe.

#### **JUNE 6 ----> Club Picnic**

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Last year I tried a club picnic. It was not until the day of the picnic that any interest was shown, but I had already cancelled it. This year I simply set a date, place, and time(June 6 at 4:00). It was a pot luck affair. Any one that showed up was fine. The club provided some vittles-sodas, burgers, and chips. We had an ATARI banner up so our spot at Walnut Creek Park would be hard to miss. Even though we had had three weeks of heavy rains, the day was perfect! Dry, sunny, with a cool breeze and plenty of shade. I was ready with food, frizbees, and an Atari kite. Club member Hardy Porterfield called at about noon to check if the 4:00 picnic was still on. I said of course! Hardy, his wife, and I were the only ones to show up. To say the turn out was dissapointing doesn't do the day justice. The three of us pigged out and I had food for several days left over. A couple of people later told me they forgot, and one said they didn't get the flyer. I'm not responsible for your not marking your calendars, nor for mail delivery. We did mention these things at prior meetings. This is another event to get club members together that I won't do again.

#### **August ----> Miscelleaneous Notes**

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Rumor has it that Atari is buying out Federated. If so, they will be the first(?) Computer manufacturer to own a retail store[chain].

In case you don't know yet, the Proboard(512-467-6004) has a special AACE only section(leave feedback to the SYSOP so he can verify you). And the downloads are available to members only. It caters to more or less 'professional' informaton in the 8 bit and ST(and future machines). Thanks to Jim Fuller for his time and effort.

Anybody want a CP/M library? We have the CPMUG set on 5" DSDD disks. The SIG/M is on 8". Since we have had no requests for this information, we are probably selling the complete set. We will have one more talk about it, but the proposed plan is to sell them as a whole. I may try to port some of the Basic or C files(if any) to the 8 bit. Part of the reason is that SWP, Inc., the makers of the ATR-8000, has maintained a closed system for the box, so software/hardware has not progressed.

We will be starting a PC library which will contain only proven worthwhile software disks.

In an attempt to get members more interested in the General meeting, we tested an idea of mine(could have come from another newsletter) in August. We would have the usual general information, then break into an 8 bit group and a separate ST group. In this way people could only see what they were interested in. Usually those bored with a demo not on their



system would start up interfering conversations in the back of the room. The new format lets other discussions occur, lets impromptu demos take place, and lets the demoer have more freedom and time for the talk. People interested in both discussions can visit both (the demoer should attempt a talk that covers prepared topics twice if there is any interest). We will from time to time have a special presenter on either system talk to all. This new format was generally accepted but we will need to add a baffle in the future. We need at least one person for each system at each meeting, with demoers sharing the systems or someone bringing another one as needed.

Considering the lack of enthusiasm for the 180+ members in the Austin area, after my six years efforts with AACE I've made a late new years resolution. As of the first day of September, I'm restricting my activities to the office I'm elected to: Treasurer. This means we need demoers, Show coordinators, cashiers, and a Tradin' Post manager (for mail order sales, though that has been slow lately). The President, Vice Pres., and the Treasurer were elected at the August meeting (elected implies more than one candidate which we really have never had). We need assistants for the President, Vice president, all librarians, cashier, and SIG officers. We could use a production staff-people that will take needs for newsletters and forms and produce them. Fred Cone will no longer be Secretary-he can't spend the time transcribing notes, but Jim Fuller will fill that spot (needs a substitute), and we need a reporter to cover pertinent events. Mike Detlefsen will no longer be ST Librarian, we need that place filled soonest. Bob Borowicz, our past 8 bit librarian has been replaced with Nelson Reynolds (apologies too the other volunteer-we needed someone familiar with AACE and 8 bit systems so problems can be fixed) as Bob was usually away on business trips so didn't have the time any more. Thanks Fred, Mike, and Bob! (Should I thank myself for the many things I've done? I'd rather more people were involved so that the club was thriving-it is merely squirming these days). Speaking of club involvement, I was reading another newsletter which sports a column on the 8 bit machines, usually short simplified programming topics. Well, this one month the usual author stepped aside to print a submission from someone else. I was terribly annoyed (and hurt) to find out that the column was authored by someone living right here in Austin, TX and wasn't even a member of AACE!!!!!! Imagine contributing to a newsletter 2000 miles away instead of the local one, that's really going out of your way to avoid the club. This didn't help my day.

Well, the September General meeting will (did) feature MEGAMAX from Dallas. Most people should renew their membership during August -September. Since we have only had three newsletters this year, we are going to extend the memberships at least four months for everyone. Everyone should encourage the Editor to get to a monthly issuance, get help, or resign the position (he was heard saying that he has been too busy this summer to produce an issue yet. If so, what does this mean when he starts back to college in September? There is a responsibility for this and every club office. Some time in September or October the 2nd Annual Central Texas PC Computer Faire will be held. We need a coordinator (and a better location) for this show.

Well that's it for this installment of miscellaneous notes....bye

Late News: October 27th, Dave the club president talked with Eric about the



newsletter. He and Eric decided that the best thing would be for Eric to resign, which he did. Rick Detlefsen(that's me) will TEMPORARILY return as Newsletter editor only(I won't be making them). WE REALLY NEED A NEWSLETTER EDITOR, a person that has the time to spend with this. It really takes as much time as you want to put into it.

See the special events bulletins for November and December meetings.

**Dale Cone** and **Diane Striegler** have volunteered to be the cashier at the two regular meetings(not SIG meetings, etc.). They will also manage the sellable hardware and stuff. Dale is also volunteering to assemble and mail the newsletters, relieving the editor of those tasks(I'm sure she could use help).

Misc. Notes cont'd...

A new software store has opened in our midst. It is **SOFTWARE, ETC.**, a division of B Dalton Books. They are located on U.S.(non highway) 183 near Target at Ohlen Rd.

In browsing through the store, I found them to be IBM, Apple/MacIntosh, Commodore 64/128 oriented. The ST and Amiga have three shelves(out of MANY) under the heading 'Other'. There is no 8 bit Atari software. On the plus side, they have a lot of books on computers. While I didn't really notice any for the ST, I did see Compute's 'Mapping the Atari' for the 8 bit. There are also many language and general purpose books that can apply to both systems. Of particular interest, they carry the line of 'InvisiClues' for the Infocom games, and the hint books for Alternate Realities, the City. They also carry disks, disk cabinets, printer paper(pastel and eye burning colors, parchment, and white), envelopes, and labels. They carry joysticks and magazines as well, and have other miscellaneous hardware. In talking to the people there, they indicated a desire to get the newest titles as soon as they are available(as Software Place used to). You should stop by at least to see what they have.

Diane Striegler and I went to the Grand Opening of the New **Federated** store in Westgate Mall. It is a large place filled with TV's, stereo's, VCR'S, microwaves, and personal electronics. They also have a good size section on computers! They have IBM(a clone I think), the Amiga's, and the **Atari** line-both **8 bit** and **ST**. No Mega's yet, though they did have the **XEP-80** adapter, and the 1200 baud modem. They have the ST monitor with internal drive(SS) as well. For software:they have the **AtariSoft** line-titles for Commodore, IBM, and Apple. In the **8 Bit Atari** line they have only Atari titles, but have third party titles as well for the ST. There are other lines for other computers as well. Overall, a very good software department(for us). **Federated** also carries video game systems-among them the 2600, 5200, and 7800 systems, but no **XEGS**. Pricing seems to be full retail(more or less). Stock on Atari's are the 520ST, the 130XE(\$189), and 800XL(\$99 I think), but no 8 bit drives(one salesperson said now that **Atari** owns **Federated**, they hope to get drives in), and game systems.



## FROM THE MAILBAG...

by Rick Detlefsen stardate 1987.08.17

These are things I've received that have any relevancy.

From Migraph (producers of FAST, Label Master, and Easy Draw) comes M/CADD, a 3D wireframe modeler and 2D drawing composer. Database includes lines; circles; arcs, and points, 32767 layers, text in any size; font; rotation; weight; or style, automatic dimensioning, user defined parts/templates, 2D vector and plane functions, 3D vector; plane; line; and mirror functions, viewing from center at any point or cursor, zoom, and handles file data in binary; ascii; M/CADD; Easy Draw meta file (GEM); IGES; or DXF formats. The 2D and 3D packages are available separately for \$299.95, or both for \$499.95 until September 30, 1987.

Speaking of Migraph, they have upgraded Label Master to an Elite version. The new version includes multiple label formats, graphics design utilities, mixed text printing, and 9 or 24 pin printer support. Retail for \$44.95, but current owners can upgrade for \$5.00.

They have also upgraded Easy Draw. The current version is 2.0. Support products are now available. This includes the Font Pack 1 (\$39.95. Contains Rocky and Hi Tech and comes in 9 pin and 24 pin versions), Personal Draw Art 1 (\$29.95. Contains over 100 vehicles, borders, symbols, etc.), Technical Draw Art 1 (\$29.95. Contains electrical schematics, hydraulic and piping layouts, flow charts, wiring diagrams, etc.). Also, drivers for 24 pin and the HP Laserjet+ printers are available for \$19.95 (from Migraph only). Shortly, they will have a postscript driver available. Supercharger is a companion product which will allow Easy draw to load bit mapped graphics images (a feature sorely lacking) in an resolution independent manner. When available, this will retail for under \$50.00 from Migraph only.

Computalk is a BBS system which links 6 Atari 800's together. It features Email, downloads, message bases, adventure games, User forums, and will soon be adding multi player games. They have recently joined up with PC Pursuit, a telecommunications service (requires a one time \$25 registration fee, and \$25.00 per month unlimited use fee. Works only on those that are a part of PC Pursuit.). Phone (817) 589-2588 or (214) 589-2588 if using PC pursuit.

Broderbund has a special offer to user group members. We have rebate forms for \$5.00 off any Broderbund product for \$15.00 or more. Included is a coupon for \$5.00 off their new touch typing program TYPE! and a coupon to resell any other touch typing program to them for \$10.00. Offer valid for purchases between June 15 and September 15, 1987. There is also a cruise sweepstakes entry blank included. (This may be printed too late to be of use, so come to the meetings!).

MICHTRON has released the GFA Basic Companion designed to create Radio button; dialog; help text; and error boxes and sliders. The package is \$49.95, with a demo disk only \$5.00, or you can download a demo file from 'IS Atari 16 area or Genie's Michtron Roundtable.



Tune Up! is a floppy and Hard disk organizer which allows the user to rewrite information which currently is stored in fragmented slow areas on disk onto contiguous areas, while returning free space to a contiguous area as well, thus speeding disk access. Other disk utilities are included. \$49.95.

The Algebra I series of education software is based on 16 years of Algebra teaching. This package is designed for the mature learner-no Care Bears or Winnie the Pooh. \$39.95.

220-ST is a global terminal emulator. Supports VT52, VT100, and VT200 in 7 bit or 8 bit modes. Ascii, Xmodem, and Kermit transfer methods are available. Baud rate, screen, keyboard, macros, auto dialing, and help files are included. \$49.95.

DSS tells us that MAC/65 and it's toolkit are being discontinued as of July 31, 1987. The distribution rights have expired and will not be renewed. When store stock is depleted, these items will not be available. As a side note, we did not receive this notice until the 10th of July. DSS must have known about this much earlier, so we should have been told in March or April when there was time to let people take advantage of the special purchase offer (It has already expired).

Interactive Microsystems has released FONT PARTNER. This will let the user create needed fonts for Publishing Partner (Soflogik) in a manner much easier than the public domain version from Softlogik. \$24.95.

Terrific Corp. has released the X-10 power Manager system for the Atari 8 bit systems. Provides hardware and software to control lights, appliances and other devices. Use up to 256 modules individually or grouped, program sequences, timer control, and diagnostics. For 48k or more Ataris. (no price available but a 20% discount is available). EZRAM is a 520K 520ST upgrade that requires no soldering. Software included for diagnostics, accessories, and entertainment. Lists for \$199.99.

Z-PORT is an external device controller for the ST which gives the user 24 programmable I/O lines, with software for testing and configuration. Includes a clock/calendar. Source codes included. Modules available are IEEE 488 controller, A/D 12 bit, Armatron robot controller, and a solid state high voltage relay. (\$149.95. A 20% discount is available).

Z-Time is a clock/calendar chip module for the ST which installs between an IC and its socket. Software will boot and install the device. \$49.95 for the 520ST version, \$59.95 for the 520STfm or 1040 ST version.

#### DIRECTORY:

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## THE ADVENTURER'S CORNER by Michael Detlefsen

Welcome once again to the Adventurer's Corner. There are a lot of new programs to talk about this time, so we will cut the small talk and get down to the news.

**Infocom** has released five games since the last column. These are (in no particular order):

### **Stationfall-The Lurking Horror-Hollywood Hijinx-Plundered Hearts-Nord and Bert Couldn't Make Head or Tail of It**

**Stationfall** is the sequel to the very popular **Planetfall** by the ever popular Steve Meretzky (Sorcerer, Hitchhiker's Guide, A Mind Forever Voyaging, Leather Goddesses of F(hobos). Once again you are off on a mysterious adventure accompanied by your faithful robot companion, Floyd. As a result of your good deeds in **Planetfall**, you were promoted from Ensign Seventh class to Lieutenant First Class (wow!). You consequently discovered that paperwork can be just as boring as scrubbing decks. Your current assignment is to zip over to a space station and get a supply of Request Form Forms. Sounds easy. Hah. When you get to the space station, you discover that it is deserted, except for several robots (inactive) and a few low order life forms. Your mission is to find out what is going on and make the universe safe for bureaucrats. Floyd may even help, although you should keep your eye on him, as he does tend to get into mischief.

The package comes with a uniform patch ("Where Angels Fear to Tread"), a few pages of orders, and a set of blueprints for the space station. Don't let the inclusion of the maps fool you into thinking you won't have to get out your pencil and paper, there will be plenty of opportunity for you to hone your map making skills in this game. An enjoyable game.

The **Lurking Horror** is the Infocom's entry into the horror genre. This is sort of a H.P. Lovecraft/Stephen King/John Carpenter game, in which you are cast as a student in a New England University, the George Underwood Edwards Institute of Technology (G.U.E. Tech). In fact, there is not much in the way of horror in this game, which is not to say that it is not a good game, but the slimy, horrible things don't put in an appearance until near the end of the game. In summary, your task was to get to the Computer Center and finish up one of your assignments. A blizzard has trapped you in the campus buildings, and it is late at night. And you find that you are not alone (Insert maniacal laughter here). **Lurking Horror** is by Dave Lebling, co-author of the Zork trilogy and sole author of **Starcross** (one of my favorites), **Suspect**, and **Spellbreaker**.

**Hollywood Hijinx** was authored by "Hollywood" Dave Anderson. As with **Stationfall** and **Lurking Horror**, this is a middle-of-the-road adventure in difficulty. Of the five games discussed here, HH is my favorite, and is the one I would recommend for entertainment value. The scenario is that at 8 o'clock one evening you are left outside the mansion that belonged to your Uncle Buddy and Aunt Hildegard. Your task is to find ten treasures in 12 hours and you will inherit the house and the treasures.



Fail to find all ten and you will get nothing. These treasures are hidden both in the house and on the surrounding estate (it's not real large). This game has some very nice puzzles, and they are a nice mix of difficulties. The Atomic Chihuahua alone is worth the price of the game!

**Plundered Hearts** is the first Gothic/Romance/Adventure game from Infocom (and maybe from anyone). It is the first game by Infocom's Amy Briggs. I haven't played this one much, but it involves pirates, the West Indies, crocodiles, and other adventures on the high seas in the 17th century. Don't let the fact that the main character is a woman keep all you male adventurers from playing this one, it looks like it has some very nice puzzles.

**Nord and Bert** (to make the title shorter) is one of the strangest games I have seen (not as weird as the Prisoner, but close). It is sub-titled "Eight Tales of Cliches, Spoonerisms, and Other Verbal Trickery". This is a collection of eight scenarios, each using a different form of word play as its premise. One of them uses spoonerisms ("munching lobsters" vs. "lunching mobsters") to further the plot. It is unlike any other Infocom game to date, and it is going to appeal to those who take delight in the use (and mis-use) of language. There isn't any mapping to speak of in this game, as the status line will tell you of all the locations that you can go to. Another feature not seen on in the Infocom line is the inclusion of a hint command. You can type "Hint" and a menu comes up with a list of things to get hints about, along with a number of red herrings. You may choose to get one of several mild hints or even a direct answer, similar to the way the Invisiclues books work. This is another of my games-in-progress, so I can't give much of an overview at this time, other than to say that it is very interesting.

Now for some depressing news. Infocom has announced that they are no longer going to provide support for Atari computers as has been done in the past. Specifically, traditional text adventures, for the most part, will not be available on the ST. What *\*few\** games will be ported to the Atari ST will be available mail-order direct from Infocom only. The reason for this, as stated on the CompuServe Gamers Forum, is that in many cases only a hundred or so copies of an adventure were sold nation-wide. That won't (in my opinion) pay for the labels for the packages, much less advertising or game testing. We aren't alone in this, as the Amiga is included in this cut-back. The representative on CIS left a message to the effect that Amiga and Atari together were substantially less than 2% of Infocom business, and that just wasn't a large enough number to justify the work involved. Beyond Zork (shipping now for the ST, not going to be available for the 8-bit due to memory requirements) is the last game to be distributed the old way. The only way any new efforts will be done for the Atari is if Infocom thinks they will sell well, i.e., something like Hitchhiker's Guide. 8-bit owners should not feel left out. Most new games that Infocom is planning are apparently going to be too large to run on the XL/XE series, so we won't be able to get them for the 8-bit either (probably leaves out the Commodore and Apple 8 bit systems as well, Ed.). We can complain all we want to, but we have to realize that WE, as ST program purchasers, are responsible for this situation. If we don't buy the product, then the company will not make the product any more. There is a solution for ST owners, though. PC-DITTO will run the PC version of Infocom games on



your ST. There is one store here in Austin that will, if you buy a program from them, copy a program that is on a 5.25" disk to a 3.5" disk. Infocom games do not run much more slowly on PC-DITTO than the native ST code does, partially because the game is memory-resident. (8 bit Atari owners that have an ATR-8700 and CP/M or MSDOS will probably be able to run the generic versions).

More next time..... Keep your torch dry.

cont'd from the Mail Bag:

Other mail:

Marek Paskiewicz is an Atari user in Poland. Computer related hardware, software, and printware are very difficult to come by. He would like to correspond with other XL users. His address is:  
UL. WALCZAKA 88/5  
66-400 Gorzow WLUP  
Poland

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**FROM THE PRESIDENT** by Dave Mann

Well, would you believe we will now have a regular newsletter again? Yes, Rick has volunteered to be **temporary** newsletter editor until we get another volunteer. So please, if you think you might be interested in being the Club Newsletter Editor, come talk to us.

The new (vaporware) **ATARI TT** computer will now have the new 68030 processor. It will run at least three times faster than the current ST's and will have 4 VME slots for adding industry standard cards to the computer. It really should be a winner. Time of sale is undetermined at present. Call or write and say you want it now.

**Word Perfect** looks very good for the ST, we had a lively discussion at the November meeting.

I can not wait for the December **Holiday Party**. It is December 12 at 7:00 PM. The disk Party will end at 5:00 and that will give us time to set up. Remember we would like as many people as possible to bring computers to the meeting so that we can have games running. We are arranging to have a **MidiMaze** competition, so please plan on bringing you ST and joystick. We hope to have 16 ST's playing **MidiMaze** against each other. We will need 16 midi cables as well.

In case you can't tell, this column is being written at the disk party. That is what happens to presidents that are late.

Please come to the December meeting prepared to comment on the programs you think are the best and worst for the Atari's. We want everyone to be able to come away from the meeting with a list of programs that they want for Christmas. Also, let's share our knowledge of the dogs around. See you in December.



## Summary of FCC Proposal

To access this on CompuServe, type 60 FCC at any prompt. You can even send a CONGRESSgram!

In a Notice of Proposed Rule Making released July 17, 1987, the Federal Communications Commission recommended that companies using local telephone exchanges to provide interstate access to "enhanced services" be assessed a carrier access charge. These "enhanced service providers" include companies such as CompuServe and all other services that provide computer-based communications, information retrieval and network services.

Such companies would be charged as much as \$5 an hour each time one of their customers used a local telephone exchange to access an interstate data communications network. The new rate structure would take effect January 1, 1988.

Currently, enhanced service providers do not pay this carrier access charge as they have not previously been considered a "carrier" and of concerns that an access fee would increase operating costs too sharply, threatening their economic viability. Instead they pay "subscriber line charges," which are flat fees and not based on connect time usage. Now, according to the FCC proposal, this is no longer appropriate and these companies must pay more of the cost of providing local telephone exchange services.

## CompuServe's Position on the FCC Proposal

CompuServe's opposition to the FCC proposal focuses on two areas where we feel the impact would be hit hardest: current subscribers and the online information industry.

For the CompuServe subscriber, adoption of the proposal could result in an increase of up to \$5 per hour in connect rates -- perhaps even more for those subscribers who access the CompuServe Information Service via Telenet or TYMNET. CompuServe believes this fee is unfair to its subscribers, especially for individuals who use the service at home.

Our goal has always been to provide our subscribers with a broad array of top-quality information services at a reasonable cost. Our recent reduction of daytime connect rates is one example of our efforts to keep subscribers' costs down. The proposed access charges, some of which we would be forced to pass along to subscribers would be a step in the wrong direction.

On a larger scale, the proposed fee could cripple the growth of the fledgling information service industry. Current users may suddenly find their favorite services priced beyond reach; prospective users may decide against subscribing on the basis of cost alone. The impact would be particularly severe on educational and other non-profit institutions that rely on having affordable access to online information. With the market for online services thus curtailed, fewer companies will be inclined to develop new services. The steady growth and healthy competition that have characterized this young industry will be stifled.

We are not alone in our position. In addition to statements issued by leading firms in the online information industry, ADAPSO -- the industry association for computer software and services -- has sharply criticized the proposal, claiming that it "would have devastating effect on the U.S. computer services industry while severely and unnecessarily increasing costs to users of data processing services."

To help you compose letters to your Congressional representatives and the FCC, following are some suggested points to include:

\* The proposal would sharply increase the cost of information services to the consumer -- by some estimates as high as 75 percent. This would price online services out of the reach of many consumers.



\* The proposal would threaten the viability of the online information service industry. Thanks to steady growth and competition within the industry, consumers can now choose from a broad range of affordable, high-quality services. Assessing the proposed access charges would squelch further growth and development of the industry. Once again, the consumer would ultimately pay the price.

Senator Lloyd Bensten (D) Brazoria County, TX Office phone (in DC): 202-224-5922

Senator Phil Gramm (R) College Station, TX Office phone (in DC): 202-224-2934

Following is a brief sample letter expressing opposition to the FCC proposal. Remember, your letter will have more impact on its recipients if it's original. We urge you to draft your note using the points mentioned earlier and using the following sample letter as a guide rather than as a form letter.

We suggest you send copies to all four FCC Commissioners, your Congressional representative and senators: Rep. Ed Markey, chairman of the House Telecommunications and Finance Subcommittee; and Sen. Daniel Inouye, Chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Communications. Senator Inouye and Representative Markey's addresses are:

Senator Daniel Inouye Chairman, Senate Subcommittee on Communications SH-227 Hart Building Washington, DC 20515

Representative Ed Markey Chairman, House Telecommunications Subcommittee B-331 Rayburn Building Washington, DC 20515

FCC Commissioners:

Mr Dennis Patrick, Chairman  
James H Quello, Commissioner  
Patricia Diaz Dennis, Commissioner  
Mimi Dawson, Commissioner

1919 M Street N.W. Washington, DC 20554

--- SAMPLE LETTER ---

August 1, 1987

The Honorable John Doe  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Re: FCC Access Charge Proposal

Dear Congressman Doe:

I am writing to you to voice my opposition to the FCC proposal to impose carrier access charges for computer-based services and information retrieval systems (cc docket No. 87-215).

As a subscriber to the CompuServe Information Service, I use my computer to retrieve vital information, send electronic



mail messages, and purchase goods. The proposal would sharply increase my costs and those of other home users.

The online information service industry would be seriously threatened if this proposal were adopted. In its short life, this industry has made tremendous strides in making massive amounts of current information accessible to the public at a reasonable cost. Consumers do not want to see their choices narrowed as service providers cease to enter the market.

In light of these serious ramifications, I urge you to petition the FCC to not implement this proposal.

Sincerely,

Jane Q. Public  
5000 Arlington Center Blvd.  
Columbus, Ohio 43220

I thought this is of extreme interest. Write your Senator and Representative today. Write the FCC. Other thoughts (from other newsletters and me): many packet networks can handle twelve users at the same time-the carrier could make as much as \$60.00 more an hour (at the current average \$2.00/hr per user, they can make \$24.00/hr. total). If the packet network carriers were financially suffering, they would be clamoring to us too raise rates. The government has interfered in enough things that worked (i.e. the phone company). We're losing the Space Race, Europeans are tuning in to Prestel (and other computer/television information systems) still years away for us, and Social Security systems are fading away. Even Hollywood is moving it's base elsewhere. Information is one of the last available industries in which America can compete. It is imperative we not price our country out of the information revolution. Rick D.

## THE EDITOR'S DESK

Well, this holiday season will see several new products. Rumors are that the Mega ST's are on dealers shelves-with and without the blitter. the XEP80 80 column adapter is out, the 1200 baud modem for the ST and 8 bit is out-but no software driver for the 8 bit yet. There are many new software titles out for both systems (what the 8 bit lacks in numbers it makes up for in quality). I recently purchased **Alternate Reality-City and Dungeon**, **Stationfall** and **Movie Maker** for the 8 bit, **Midi Maze**, **Plutos**, and **Air Ball** for the ST.

Our club 130XE is really a 320K XE. A 576K version is a little harder. Considering the few wiring changes needed. ATARI made the comment they may go ahead and upgrade the XE line to 320K. Personally, if they are going to go to the trouble. I'd rather see an 8 bit that takes advantage of current technology. An 8 bit version of the ST. BUT, with a better keyboard, and 8 bit user friendliness (not ST hostility and clumsiness). Portability would be nice, but Atari hasn't done that with the ST yet, even.



## ST INTEREST SECTION

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The Editor  
Austin Atari Computer Enthusiasts Newsletter  
5105 Lansing Drive  
Austin, TX 78745

March 31, 1987

Dear Sir:

Reading your review of Regent Base, our Relational GEM Database, that appeared on pages 14 and 15 of the January / February newsletter, I feel I must point out some information that your reviewer must not have known about.

The reviewer seems to only discuss Regent Word 1 and Regent Word II, our word processors, and makes no mention of Regent Base itself. That taken, Mr. Someone (as is shown in the byline) seemed to have problems with the copy protection, near letter quality printing, indentation, and corrections to the beginning or end of a line.

Regent Word II comes with 18 printer drivers built in. I use it on a Brothers 2024L 24 Wire printer. Even in proportional print mode, Regent Word II really shines. We've even included a Printer Driver Create program into Word II, so you can configure it to your own printer. If a custom printer driver is needed, we have a service which costs \$10 for us to develop a special driver for your printer. Just send us your printer manual, a diskette, and a self addressed stamped envelope.

Regent Word II is the only word processor for the ST that has a secondary left margin. This paragraph was typed by setting the secondary left margin to 15, and the primary to 10. The margins may be changed at any time by inserting a Margin ruler.

Lastly, to move the cursor to the beginning or end of a sentence, press the left or right arrow keys while holding down the CONTROL key. The cursor will jump to the start or end of the current line.

I hope that you will forward this letter to Mr. Someone, and also print the letter in the next issue of the newsletter if possible. Please put me your mail list, I'd like to continue getting the newsletter!

Sincerely,

*Frank Cohen*  
Frank Cohen



## THE WELL TEMPERED ATARI

by Ed Spurlock

Meet The New TOS. Same As The Old TOS... Well, the new TOS ROMs are not as much improvement as I hoped--a few minor bugs fixed, but no major improvements, such as being able to change screen resolution from within an application.

Hark! Did I hear someone say that they might like to change screen resolution from within an application? If you haven't already heard, you should know that DBASIC (from DTACK GROUNDED) allows you to do just that. But wait--(I hear you asking)--doesn't GEM require you to reboot before changing screen resolution? Exactly--so DBASIC doesn't use GEM. If you use DBASIC, you can't use the GEM routines for the mouse and you can't easily read disks written using TOS. Why would any fool use DBASIC, then? Well, there's the screen reso changes. There's the speed of DBASIC (very impressive). There's the floating point math. DBASIC uses 8-byte floating point--that's 4 bits more than the standard floating point of the Control Data 6500 that I learned FORTRAN on. (I am not saying that DBASIC is more accurate than a CDC 6500--just that DBASIC uses more bits). Pipe stress freaks and crystallography weenies might take a good look at DBASIC. I plan to get a copy of the DBASIC manual just in my role as patron of the arts, because the commentary on GEM in the released version of DBASIC is a great contribution to comedic literature. Check out DBASIC, friends. You can do so just by making a copy of the disk in the ACE public domain library. DTACK GROUNDED is taking a novel approach to marketing--they are selling the manual, but practically giving away the program. When you buy DBASIC, they will send you a copy of the manual, a program disk (not copy-protected), and extra official disk labels. If you make a copy of the disk and attach an official disk label, that is a legal copy of DBASIC that can be given to a friend. To do any work with it, though, you really do need the manual.

If you want or need to work with GEM and TOS, you might be interested in GFA Basic. I am. This language makes programming fun again. Use the interpreter version while developing, then compile for extra speed. The mouse is supported, windows are supported, menus are supported--hey, this is neat!

Try some MIDI programming using GFA Basic. Here's a first program:

```
DO
  Midi_byte% = INP(3)
  OUT 3, Midi_byte%
LOOP
```

This program simply reads the ST's MIDI-IN port and writes the data to the ST's MIDI-OUT port, making the ST act as if it is not there. Why would you want to do that? Well, if you are doing a show in which you use a sequencer for part of the show and play the same sound modules live during another part of the show, you might like to be able to switch between these modes of playing without having to switch cables around. Of course, most sequencers will allow you to pass information from the MIDI-IN to the MIDI-OUT without adding anything to it, so this program isn't really that useful. You can improve it with a PRINT statement:

```
DO
  Midi_byte% = INP(3)
  OUT 3, Midi_byte%
  PRINT USING "\. .\ ",
    HEX$(Midi_byte%);
```



## LOOP

This program takes information from the MIDI-IN, passes it to the MIDI-OUT, and prints it to the screen in hexadecimal (base-16) format, the most common format used for printing MIDI bytes. The USING "\..\\" command ensures that each byte will take 4 columns to print, which works well with a 40- or 80-column screen. You can use this program to debug MIDI applications, finding out what bytes have been sent to cause given effects. Try it with an Akai AX-80 synthesizer. RUN the program using GFA Basic. Connect a MIDI cable from the MIDI-OUT of the Akai to the MIDI-IN of the ST. You should see a blank screen. Now press and hold Middle C on the Akai keyboard. The screen will show:

90 3C nn

(where nn is a hex number from 1 to 7F). The "90" means turn on a note using MIDI channel one. The "3C" means notes number 3C (that's note number 60 in base-10). And the "nn" refers to the speed at which you pressed the key--the faster you press, the larger the number. (This is the "MIDI Velocity" you may have heard about). Is your finger getting tired from holding the key? Then let it up. The screen will now show:

90 3C nn 90 3C 00

The three new bytes mean: On channel one, turn on note 3C with a velocity of zero. MIDI instruments all interpret a note-on command with velocity zero as a command to turn the note off.

If you RUN this program, connect a Casio CZ-101 (or CZ-1000, 3000, or 5000) synthesizer's MIDI-OUT to the ST's MIDI-IN, and press Middle C, you get:

90 3C 40

The velocity value will be 40, regardless of how fast you pressed the key. The CZ-101 does not have a velocity sensitive keyboard. If you now release the key, the screen shows:

90 3C 40 3C 00

What happened to the second note-on byte (the second 90)? The Casio synths use a MIDI trick called running status. Running status means that the effects of the note-on command last until it is necessary to send a different MIDI command. Thus, if you press and hold C, E, and G, the screen will show something like this:

90 3C 40 40 40 43 40

which a receiving synth will interpret as: On channel one, turn on note 3C with a velocity of 40, note 40 with a velocity of 40, and note 43 with a velocity of 40. The Akai AX-80 does not send MIDI bytes using running status, but like all MIDI instruments must understand running status sent by instruments that do use it. Similarly, any program you write for MIDI programming must be able to deal with running status.

Connect a MIDI cable from the MIDI-OUT of a Roland synthesizer to the ST's MIDI-IN. If you now RUN the program, you get:

FE FE FE FE FE FE FE FE

and so on for several lines. If you press any keys on the Roland keyboard, the corresponding bytes are printed to the screen, but then the FE bytes continue every 300 milliseconds. FE is the MIDI Active Sensing byte, a feature put in MIDI from the start. The idea was that if the MIDI data stream was interrupted (for example, by someone pulling a cable loose) a receiving instrument could go into an error state if it didn't receive any MIDI bytes after 300 ms. The thing is, you don't need any



special command for the receiving instrument to go into an error state--if the MIDI note stream gets cut, the receiving instruments keep playing old notes and refuse to recognize new ones--and that's enough of an error state for anybody. The Active Sensing byte has to be taken care of in MIDI software. You can take care of it in this program by just printing anything that isn't an Active Sensing byte:

```
DO
  Midi_byte% = INP(3)
  OUT 3, Midi_byte%
  IF Midi_byte% <> &hFE THEN
    PRINT USING "\..\\".
      HEX$(Midi_byte%);
  ENDIF
LOOP
```

If you want to use these or future programs I may write for this column, but don't want to buy GFA Basic, don't worry. I'll make compiled versions available. Check the AACE Public Domain Disk library, or write me at P.O. Box 49356, Austin, TX 78765.



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# EVENTS for NOV. 1987

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 S. Austin SIG 7:30PM AB COMP. S				5 General Meeting 8-10 PM		7 Disk Party 1-5 PM
						14 MayBe a Dallas trip.
				26 Thanks- giving Day		

# EVENTS for DEC. 1987

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				3 General Meeting 8-10 PM		
6 S. Austin SIG 7:30PM AB Comp. S						12 Disk Party 1-5PM Holiday Party Starts at 7:00 PM Potluck! MIDIMAZE
			16 Hanukkah			
					25 Christmas DAY Solstice	
					1 Jan New Years' Day	

**NOTES:** The General and Disk party meetings are held at St. Georges Church, S.E. Corner I.H. 35(N), in Kleberg Hall on Ardenwood. In November only, the Disk Party is the first Saturday. In December, Our Holiday party is after the Disk Party at 7:00 PM. See December N.L for more information. The South Austin SIG meets at AB Computer South(William Cannon and West Gate Blvd-across from HEB) at 7:30 PM.



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